

**REMARKS**

Applicant believes that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance. In the event the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of the claims which could be clarified or satisfied by a telephonic discussion or interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned attorney.

DATED this 30<sup>TH</sup> day of APRIL 2002.

Respectfully submitted,



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1-4, 6-8, 14-15, 17-18, 20, 23, and 25 as follows:

Please delete claims 5, 9-13, 16-24 and 26-32.

1. (Amended) A method for preparing mesophase pitch-based tape comprising

the step of:

extruding mesophase pitch through a slot-shaped die with an aspect ratio of [10] 50 or more and drawing at a draw ratio greater than 5[.], wherein the shear rate in the die is in the range 1000 to 5000s<sup>-1</sup>.

2. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising[:] the step of stabilising the mesophase pitch-based tape.

3. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 [or 2] further comprising[:] the step of oxidatively stabilising the mesophase pitch-based tape.

4. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein [the planar molecules arrange mainly parallel to the major surface of] the mesophase pitch-based tape has a major surface and planar molecules arranged mainly parallel to the major surface.

6. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the mesophase pitch based tape is subjected to an elevated temperature.

7. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the aspect ratio of the die is [20 or more, particularly preferably 30 or more, more preferably 40

or more, more especially preferably about 50 or more, even more especially preferably] 60 or more[, yet even more especially preferably 70 or more].

8. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 further comprising the step of carbonisation or graphitisation.

14. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim [9] 1 wherein [the die has an aspect ratio of about 50 and] the shear rate is in the range 1900 to  $4000\text{s}^{-1}$

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim [9] 1 wherein the [die has an aspect ratio of the die is about 80 and the shear rate is in the range 1700 to  $4900\text{s}^{-1}$ .

17. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the draw ratio is greater than 10.

18. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the tape is of flat-layer transverse texture, said method further comprising[:] the step of laminating the tape with a material capable of controlling the thermomechanical properties, transport properties or resistace to oxidation of the tape.

20. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape obtainable from a method as defined in [any one of claims] claim 1 [to 19] comprising graphite basal planes parallel to the major surface of the tape.

23. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape as claimed in [any of claims] claim 20 [to 22] comprising a flat layer transverse texture.

25. (Amended) A mesophase pitch-based tape as claimed in [any of claims] claim 20 [to 24] comprising an extended graphitic plane structure.